

● Book Review ●

*Japan's Foreign and Security Policy
under the 'Abe Doctrine':
New Dynamism or New Dead End?*

By Christopher W. Hughes. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Pp. x + 114. 2015. ISBN: 978-1-137-51424-0 (Hardback)

*Strategic Japan:
New Approaches to Foreign Policy and
the U.S.-Japan Alliance*

Edited by Michael J. Green & Zack Cooper. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Pp. v + 143. 2015. ISBN: 978-1-4422-2864-1 (Paperback)

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Those who teach a subject such as 'Japan's foreign policy' or 'Japan's diplomacy' may recently have found it much easier to follow a prime minister's foreign policy mainly because the current Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, has enjoyed a long period of his term in office with wide support from more than a two-thirds majority in both Houses of the National Diet. Since his second term started, Prime Minister Abe has successfully taken a strong leadership role both in the Cabinet and in the National Diet owing to his consecutive victories in the national elections for law makers in both Houses. The size of this majority (more than two-thirds of the seats) is almost unprecedented and extremely critical in Japan's political environment only because it may eventually enable the Prime Minister to start a series of procedures for the revision or rewriting of the so-called 'pacifist' Constitution. His long term has been supported by a continuously high approval rate, particularly among the younger generation.

The Abe administration in the second term has experienced some hard times, such as the nation-wide opposition to the forceful revision of the conventional interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution in July 2014, prior to passing the security-related legislation in September 2015. However, broadly speaking, his foreign policy, which is often referred to as 'diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map',¹ has been apparently fruitful to a certain degree, especially in relation to Japan-US security ties. This is partially because, as his administration frequently says, the recent drastic change in the security environment in East Asia has forced his cabinet and the ruling coalition parties to take a more hardline approach towards neighbouring states such as China, South Korea, and North Korea.

Against this background, teachers and students of Japan's foreign policy at university, and some experts in this field will be in need of a compact and succinct book on this theme; such a book would provide a good bird's-eye view of the current conditions surrounding Japan's security and diplomatic environment and a future perspective on the regional security within the trend of power shifting between the United States and China. For these purposes, both Christopher Hughes's *Japan's Foreign and Security Policy under the 'Abe Doctrine'* and *Strategic Japan* edited by Michael Green and Zack Cooper are up-to-date and useful. These two volumes, which deal with similar issues in terms of Japanese foreign policy, are compact and informative in terms of their examination of the recent situations concerning Japan's foreign and security policies. However, their approaches and styles are different and rather diametrically opposed.

Hughes's book is a single-authored critical monograph mostly written during his stay in Japan in 2014; it focuses on the 'Abe Doctrine' through the viewpoints of historical revisionism and US-Japan alliance relations with the neighbouring countries mentioned above on the basis of recent literature and digital journalistic sources, principally from the US, Japan, and the UK.

The first chapter of the book neatly summarises the argument: Hughes, a UK-based university professor, critically (although unsystematically) assesses 'Japan's international trajectory', the 'Abe Doctrine' in comparison with the 'Yoshida Doctrine' as a way of analysing the 'ideological foundations and policy objectives' of the former in light of the following three 'pivotal dimensions': (1) Japan's defence capabilities under a new security policy and

strategy (in Chapter 3); (2) the evolution of the US-Japan alliance relations with new defence guidelines, Okinawa, TPP, and Yasukuni (in Chapter 4); and (3) Japan's foreign relations in the Asia-Pacific region (in Chapter 5) (pp. 4-5).

Examining the origins and ideological drivers of the 'Abe Doctrine', Chapter 2 denounces Mr. Abe as an ideological revisionist breaking down the status quo including the 'post-war regime' and the 'Yoshida Doctrine'. The Abe Doctrine is intended to overturn taboos on constitutional revision, patriotic education, comfort women, the Tokyo Tribunals, and Abe's Yasukuni visit, all of which have brought about huge domestic success and complex foreign implications.

In Chapter 6, Hughes concludes, with poignant criticism, that the 'Abe Doctrine', despite some superficial new domestic success, will ultimately lead to a dead end because his contradictory radical revisionism reveals his illiberal, conflictual, and dependent foreign policies vis-à-vis the world, China and East Asia, and the United States, respectively. Adapting Michael Green's *Japan's Reluctant Realism* (2001), Hughes aptly refers to this situation as 'resentful realism', where one might see 'a Japan driven by fear of China, lack of trust in the US, and a continuing desire for the reassertion of national pride and autonomy' (p. 95).

In contrast with Hughes's book, in Chapter 1 of *Strategic Japan* edited by Green and Cooper, Michael Green gives an introductory overview of the possibility of Japan's grand strategy under the current Abe administration in cooperation with the United States with whom Japan has the strongest security alliance against its recent challenges, including a rising China and constrained economic growth. This volume of *Strategic Japan* derives from the initiative taken by a famous US think-tank based in Washington, D.C. - the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) - which collaborated with its five invited short-term visiting Japanese scholars, who were assisted by CSIS scholars. Its purpose is 'to enlighten the American policy debate on an array of topics related to Japan and the broader Asia Pacific, broaden the visiting fellows' personal networks in Washington, and help them hone their arguments for policy-makers in both the United States and Japan' (p. 2).

In Chapter 2, Yasuhiro Matsuda seeks to explain China's assertiveness since 2009 by examining the following three hypotheses: (1) 'rising trends'; (2) the 'cycle of deterioration and amelioration'; and (3) the 'redefinition of

strategic rivals'. After assessing these three trends and identifying their policy implications, Matsuda concludes that, although neighbouring states of China, such as Japan, should try to ameliorate relations with China, the United States should have a grand and concrete strategy in cooperation with its friends and allies surrounding China.

In Chapter 3, Tetsuo Kotani examines China's assertive maritime strategy such as its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy and possible US-Japan responses to it, such as the US rebalancing policy and Japan's national security strategy. Kotani concludes that Japan and the United States must jointly enhance the alliance in order to discourage China's assertiveness, and recommends the two countries revise the Japan-US Defense Guidelines in order to deter China's implementation of expansionist policies in the East and South China Seas.

In Chapter 4, Hiroyasu Akutsu reconsiders Japan's existing policy toward North Korea in light of Japan's new national security strategy to face recent challenges by North Korea and suggests the necessity of strategic adjustment by adding proposals for several new policy initiatives. He concludes that by enhancing its own defence capabilities, Japan should continue to strengthen the Japan-US-South Korea trilateral security cooperation as well as Japan-US security alliance.

In Chapter 5, Yoshikazu Kobayashi reviews Japan's policy challenges from the viewpoint of enhancing resilience in its energy supply in order to be more adaptive and responsive to supply shocks such as the 3.11 earthquake in Japan. After proposing some activities and measures to be taken, he also suggests establishing a Japan-US bilateral strategic energy dialogue on a regular basis to accelerate the development of bilateral cooperation and solidify the Japan-US alliance.

In Chapter 6, Nobuhiro Aizawa examines Southeast Asia's strategic importance to Japan in terms of economic, political, environmental, and security resiliencies in the region. In order to maintain the regional political and economic stability as a core interest against the new challenges in the South China Sea, such as China's maritime assertiveness, he concludes that the Japan-US alliance and Southeast Asia are mutually important to establishing a resilient social system in the region and confronting the numerous common challenges they share, such as natural disasters.

An inescapable contrast between Hughes's book and CSIS's *Strategic Japan* is understandable, as the authors' backgrounds and the purposes of the books, among other things, are different. Hughes's blatant criticism of the 'Abe Doctrine' and CSIS's friendly collaborative initiative for the further enhancement of the Japan-US alliance are a reflection of the authors' opposing views towards peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region against the current backdrop of US-China rivalry. Therefore, teachers of Japan's foreign policy at universities will find it academically and educationally effective to recommend both to the list of suggested readings, as they will profit from being exposed to opposing views.

Hughes critically emphasises the revisionist and contradictory perspective of the 'Abe Doctrine', while CSIS highlights the importance of the bilateral alliance system for both Japan and the United States through the eyes of five Japanese scholars. In other words, the former regards Abe as a self-contradictory revisionist, while the latter considers China as a rising revisionist challenging the *Pax Americana*.

At this moment, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is considering the extension of its presidency for the possible benefit of Abe, who is enjoying a high approval rate and a long presidency of two terms (six years). On the other hand, the United States is soon having a presidential election vote on 8 November 2016 to choose between Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump,² who have very different views over foreign and security policy including the US-Japan alliance, and nuclear weapons. By the time this review is published in 2017, however, people will hopefully have noticed that a perspective on the political environment surrounding the two countries has developed further. Under these circumstances, the two books under review will be of interest to any readers who are concerned about the future of the bilateral relationship.

¹ For this phrase, see, for example, the following official website of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/ep/page22e_000373.html> (accessed 27 September 2016).

² After his victory at the Presidential Election in November 2016, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States on 20 January 2017. He has expressed his intention to withdraw from the TPP since his presidential campaign.

